



"Splinternet" Virtual Event | Internet Governance Forum Greece July 5th 2022

Konstantina Nathanail

My name is Konstantina Nathanail. And on behalf of the executive committee of IGF Greece, I would like to welcome everybody to this event. I'm very happy to have seen some people so many people standing up and some people joining us. It's a very interesting discussion to be having. It's a very relevant topic to be talking about the splinternet. Um, I will before I actually pass on the speaking time to the actual experts in this group, I like to briefly say and welcome you on behalf of the executive committee. IGF Greece started relatively... it's a really fresh initiative. It started in March 2021. And we had our first conference in November 2021. And we're now preparing for a second conference in November of this year. We are very excited to have built our own network and to start cooperating with so many amazing speakers and experts, some of whom you see with us today. If you also wish to be part of our community, either as individual or as an organization. You can find us on all social media as IGF Greece. Yes, feel free to introduce yourself in the chat. We will be more than happy to have a discussion going on there. Also as part of this discussion, and also if you want to create cooperation with us, please feel free to reach out like I said, we're more than welcome to meet other individuals and organizations in the field. Finally, I would like to extend a warm, warm welcome and a great thank you to all of our speakers joining us today. We're all very excited to see what you're going to be talking about. And a big thank you to Haris and Ramsi who have organized this entire virtual event with no further ado, I like to pass on the

digital microphone to Konstantinos Komaitis, who also has really helped us to organize this event and will be moderating it as well. Konstantinos?

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thank you very much Konstantina. So there you have the first Greek exposure to having a male and a female name. That's really sound very much the same. It's great to be here. I am very happy to be here. I am glad to see old friends, as well as a lot of people online from Ghana, and the United States, from different parts of the world. So thank you very much for joining. And conservatives communities. I will be moderating a conversation, our conversation today. I really want to make this more of a conversation with our three experts. And we will be talking about Splinternet.

Konstantinos Komaitis

So a little bit of context before we start and before of course I introduced my friends and esteemed speakers. So one of the most perhaps one of the most complex conversations happening right now in the Internet is how global the Internet truly is. Is it as global as it was when it was created? Or have we entered a time of fragmentation or what is becoming commonly known as Splinternet. Going back to the origins of the internet's the global character of the Internet was more of an accident one can say rather than a conscious design choice. The idea was that we needed we needed a technology based on autonomous systems being able to interconnect as long as they speak to one common language and that was the Internet Protocol language. These systems could be anywhere in the world, but that was not really a prerequisite that they really had to be literally in every single part of the world. They just happen to be. The global character of the Internet, however, has been one of these core values. In 2012 technologists and a former colleague of mine, Leslie Daigle, writing for the Internet Society said about the difference global character, any endpoint of the Internet can address any other endpoint and the information received that one endpoint is as intended by the sender wherever the receiver connects to the Internet. Implicit in this is the requirement of global managed addressing naming services. So in the early days of the Internet, users users were experiencing the Internet and they felt that it was more global. For sure there were restrictions early on for instance, China imposed impose such restrictions, but in general, there were not a lot of barriers to participation, or at least so it felt like however lately the Internet feels less global. Things are changing and it feels that we are entering an era we have entered a new era better yet with the Internet is less global. And there are a bunch of factors responsible for this regulation. Geopolitical shifts, the role of China the rise of nationalism across the world, the increasing wave of Internet shutdowns, even the war in Ukraine and we will try to unpack a little bit some of those factors as we are discussing it.

As Konstantina said, we are having this conversation under the auspices of the Greek IGF. The Greek IGF is very young, but it comes at a time when Greece is experiencing a revolutionary, revolutionary digital transformations. The current government seems to be committed to all things digital, and has been very successful in using digital technologies to ease bureaucracy while also attracting investment as the Internet becomes a crucial data for Greece, it is important that national policymakers and other stakeholders understand the opportunities of a global network of networks and the unintended consequences and possible Splinternet can have.

So with this in mind, I am very happy to introduce the people who will be having a chat with today. There are friends and former colleagues, and each one of them has spent time thinking about the idea of Splinternet through their respective roles. Milton Mueller, I'll start with you. Milton is a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology and apparently the United States in the School of Public Policy in the School of Cybersecurity and Privacy. His CV is very rich and includes countless publications and professional roles and he's one of the most actually influential voices in Internet governance. Farzaneh Badii is the founder of Digital Medusa, an initiative that focuses on protecting the core values of our global digital space with sound governance through research and collective action. For the past decade, Farzaneh has undertaken research at Yale Law School, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society in Berlin. And last, but certainly not least, Jane Coffin has been working at the center of technology connectivity policy and regulatory issues in the development of the Internet since 1997. She is the current she's the current Chief Community Officer at Connect Humanity. And she was the Senior Vice President for Connectivity Issues and Development at the Internet Society. And I am consulting those communities and I am with the data governance at the New York Times.

Hi, everyone. Thank you very much for being here and for taking the time to speak to this young and emerging community. Let's start and to anyone who's watching. Please do share your thoughts and questions and I will do my best to have our panelists address them. So I will start with what I know is a very loaded question and I know that you have a lot to say. But here goes how do we how do you understand this idea of Splinternet and easy to think I mean, is it a real issue or are we just you know, is it one of those issues where everybody likes to talk about it, but it's not real, a real issue? Firstly, I'll start with you.

Farzaneh Badii

Thank you Konstantinos. So I do believe that it is an issue but I've been I've been thinking about how to frame this. And the idea of the Internet comes down to a limitation of access to various Internet certs and essential properties of the Internet and this is how I, how I frame it. And well and when you want to talk about I think that nuance does really matter. When we are talking

about access and lack of access to essential properties of the Internet, it's something different than lack of access to certain services, or contents or platforms or to danger on danger. Because when we look at kind of like limiting access to, for example, Internet protocols that in some in some nation states, Internet protocols, actually make your existence online help. So if you revoke those IP addresses, then you just don't have an you can't have an online existence. But then there are other aspects of that there are other forms of limiting access to the Internet kind of creating this kind of Splinternet which is about that, you know, not like services and properties of the of the Internet. That kind of affect your your access to certain services. So I think that this kind of detail is very important and later on, I will explain how that has affected our kind of discussions and access of certain national organizations to these essential services and properties.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thank you. Farzaneh. You've mentioned access and I you know you've mentioned access from the point of view, you know, of of the essential properties of the Internet or the services of the Internet and you know, you are faring mainly, you know, at least in first reflection, you are referring mainly to infrastructure issues. Jane, I know that you've spent some time looking at issues of access completely, perhaps disjoint from this whole idea of Splinternet, right. However, do you consider and let's put it out there right here right now, do you consider that there is any connection between access issues of access connectivity, right, and this whole idea of Splinternet, is there any nexus that perhaps people need to still start thinking about or what happened?

Jane Coffin

I think it depends on how you define splintering. And I was thinking about the word splinter. It's up there with multistakeholder and how people define it, what they mean by it, a splinter if you're looking at a piece of wood is when a little piece comes off. And sometimes those things can get stuck in your finger. If you're touching the woods, or it's a piece that's off that's a little dangerous because it's not attached to the hole. So I was thinking about this with respect to access and with respect to governance, and Milton, this will be an interesting to hear what you think about this. There's splintering in my opinion on purpose. When you pull off on purpose, you fragment yourself. We take away yourself from the hole and trying to create something else, or there's splintering due to the lack of the rules of the road with regulatory policy. investment, and a governance focus. So you can look at access from two perspectives. We're going to splinter off, maybe some countries have been looking at this and we know you mentioned China, Russia has been looking at this. There are other countries in other contexts who've been looking at this as well, where they go back to the old telco model which is country to country versus network to network, which is what the design of the Internet was meant to be is network to network, not

country to country like the old telco network. And when you have a splintering due to the lack of connectivity, that's also isolation.

And so there is some fragmentation there of bringing people back to the whole. So you could look at it is at this as intentional splintering and unintentional because if you aren't bringing your communities together to be connected, the peoples in different cities at affordable and available prices, and you're not investing differently because the world has changed. On how you connect to people from the actual infrastructure side of the house to building those networks. So there's intentional and unintentional I think you can join more people to the hole, which is what we saw during the pandemic, right. We saw that there were massive gaps. We saw that there were places where governments thought people were connected and we realized, gosh, children are sitting in cars outside of a taco bell or a fast food restaurant, or a library that was close trying to get access. So how do we get people back so there's a hole and how do we look at what the splintering the on purpose does to fragment the whole in a different way? So put that out there.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thank you very much, Jane. Certainly give us a lot to think about. And I'm going to do perhaps, lift a little bit, pick up from where you left in terms of Splinternet, and you know, it really depends on how you look at it and how you define Splinternet. And I know that you know, I've spent quite a bit of time researching and you have a book on the holly deal fragmentation where you put forward this more or less the same idea that it really depends on how you define fragmentation. And it is key in ensuring that you know, the conversations can can be fruitful, that we have a common understanding of the terms that we're using. So how did you understand this whole idea of Splinternet and do you think it is it is really as big of an issue as over the past couple of years it has become?

Milton Mueller

Yes, it is a big issue. It's probably the biggest issue facing Internet governance right now. The problem is the wording as I think Jane and Farzi both mentioned we're really talking about different things. We're not talking about technical fragmentation. Everybody's still using Internet Protocol, everybody, it is still what ties the world together technically. But what we're doing is there are deliberate decisions being made to block off services that rely on Internet protocol to be delivered. And I have always framed this for many years as this conflict between networks and states that we have fragmented territorial jurisdictions of states. And even when they're using the Internet Protocol, they're trying to impose a territorial control upon the services delivered over the Internet when of course the sort of natural tendency of global connectivity enabled by the Internet is to have the services available to anybody and everywhere. And Jane also made an important

distinction between what we might call voluntary or private decisions to disconnect or to block and collective decisions made at the state level. That's an extremely important decision. One of the reasons the Internet was so revolutionary was that it privatized networking. So it said, you know, the network is no longer some public state owned monopoly. Anybody can be a network anybody can get the resources, the addressing the domain names. That was all a private decision now. And what you have now is the reimposition or the attempt to reimpose certain forms of collective control on this global space created by the compatibility of the Internet Protocol. And you can't say that all of this blocking is bad in the sense that if I decide that I want to put into my email filters, a command that says Jane cannot send me email that's my that's my business. That's between Jane and me. It's not a public policy decision. But it's the government decides that Jane is to be censored, and nobody even people who want to talk to Jane via email can talk to her anymore. That's different order. of change. That is what we would call splintering or fragmentation, or what I like to call alignment because of the way it maps territorial jurisdictions legal jurisdictions on to the communication capabilities of the Internet.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thank you. So, I think that all three you are essentially saying that you should it is it is an issue. Splinternet is something that we need to discuss that we need to be much more clear on how we define it because the infrastructure that supports global communications will always exist, but it is what we do, how we behave towards that infrastructure, whether you're a government or a private actor that might contribute to this idea of starting to split the Internet in its individual parts. So I'm wondering, ...

Milton Mueller

Konstantinos, could I just intervene in there? So I don't want to I want to be complacent and say it will always exist because there have been attacks on the globalized coordinating functions, right? Or people who say we shouldn't have regional transnational IP address registries. We should have national registries or we shouldn't have global domain names. We should have nationally controlled domain names and and those administrators should follow geopolitical conflicts and maybe kick Russia out of the route or kick, whoever we don't like, out of the route. So I wouldn't assume that we are going to always have that there are political pressures on the fundamental coordinating actions of the Internet.

Konstantinos Komaitis

So, let's think a little bit about these actions. What do you think contributes to fragmentation? What are those factors that contribute to a splinternet? You know, the first thing would be your top three perhaps.

Farzaneh Badiei

So I'm going to mention something that I've been focusing on. I mean, of course, there are there are other factors as well. But one thing is the policies that nation states come up with in order to punish other nation states. Kind of like these are like economic sanctions, sanctions and geopolitical conflicts that lead to debt that lead to splinternet and the reason and sometimes they are not even addressed and this is very important to consider that these policies are not are not Internet related. They are about they are not directly addressing the Internet to create this Internet. What they're trying to do is to punish certain nation states because of their bad behavior because they engage with war and terrorism. And that and the US has a lot of experience with this because the US wants to punish the bad actors and also their their main job like geopolitical conflicts and and the issue of sanctions has. Also when when these sanction policies on the one hand, and then there are private actors that overcome fly with these policies, or they just don't want to bother with getting get getting in like a wager or license and also when we do catch this kind of stuff, Splinternet, I think that we should take more and more attention to other industries that the Internet that the Internet actually relies on to provide these services to keep people connected. Like the banking the banking sector or others because I'm what because yeah, it's their behavior as well. That would prevent some of the services to be provided to people online.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thank you, and the issue of sanctions I think it's very interesting, and it's becoming more and more important because we literally live in times of war and I will get back to that. But, you know, I would like to hear Milton's and Jane's perhaps top choices in terms of what causes currently what are we seeing in 2021 and 20 and 22, let's say really pushing this fragmentation agenda further and further down the road. And Milton?

Milton Mueller

I would say that trade trying to achieve trade advantages, either by blocking services from foreign countries. And the the merger... I would say the biggest problem is the merger of the digital economy with national security concerns. So if you think of a digital service as a threat, you know, as inherently a threat, which is way you know, the Chinese have always viewed it this way because free expression is inimical to their one party monopoly political system. But now you see the Europeans and the US adopting the same attitude, which is that oh tick tock is dangerous. I can't say that without laughing but this is a serious complaint among right wing in some liberal Democrats in the US that tick tock is dangerous because the Chinese Communist Party can ask for the information about users what they do on tick tock or the platforms are dangerous because they, you know, allow all kinds of strange information into your environment. So this idea that

your security is going to be protected by walling off information. flows by localizing data flows by requiring companies to register or be licensed or to prevent capital flows into your country because the evil foreigners are going to somehow use their ownership to take over your your country. This is what I see as the main driver of what we're calling fragmentation or Splinternet.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Okay, and I would like us to get back to that and I will try to play a little bit devil's advocate here. But Jane, please go ahead. What would be your number one thing currently causing splitters?

Jane Coffin

I'm gonna just say three simple things power control and money. I've seen that in so many places. And I can explain what that means. But it can be power over the conductivity itself, the infrastructure, as Milton was saying it sometimes it's seen in the form of security money because people make money off some of these things with their equipment, create a whole new intranet or a whole new thing and you've made a lot of money for your current manufacturers, or control and lack of control when some governments start to feel through disinformation maybe or through other collective action that they have the lack of control over things. So those three things and I've seen that in the international context, time and time again, particularly in some of the ITU conversations when you go into a treaty conference, that whole power control money comes to the front

Konstantinos Komaitis

Okay. So I think that more or less, you are all coming back to this concept of control, right? And the idea that governments around the world over the past few years in particular have grown more weary that this there is this Internet and that there are a lot of things that are happening that they don't like but also there are a lot of opportunities for them to be able to exercise some control. Let's leave the latter. parts on the side a little bit because in here is where if most probably we had someone from the government, they would say okay, but I hear you and that's great. But at the same time, I have to meet my social... the social contract, I have signed with my own people, whether they're Greeks or Americans or Europeans, what have you is that I cannot have a space where there is disinformation, where there is online terrorism, where there is I see a lot of people smiling, but I'm trying very hard here to play the devil's advocate, so what would just say because some of these concerns are really not tangible, right? I mean, we can no longer disregard them on the basis that, oh, they exist in a galaxy far, far away. No, they exist in front of our screens and maybe we are not exposed but a lot of other people are so what do you say to these people that they want to do the right thing, and let's give them the benefit of the doubt. They don't know how

to do it, but at the same time they feel compelled to do something to address some of those issues. Milton I'll start with you since you were the inspiration for this.

Milton Mueller

Okay, you're not such a bad devil after all. We first of all, there are globalised multistakeholder methods of dealing with content moderation. So yes you do you don't want the the creep who shoots people to be able to live stream is murder. So you can work out ways of doing that. That are transnational cooperative across governments. There is a consensus that those kinds of things should be blocked or shut down. And many of it is in fact private sector based in the sense that the platform's themselves want to protect the value of their, their environments by by eliminating, you know, really content garbage, let's call it that right. So they will do that to some extent. And I think the problem is where you get into different national standards and in particular as I said, the National Security idea, so from China's point of view, you know, American criticism of their political system coming from is is a national security threat. And the US again, is getting into that same mindset where we're saying that, you know, we have to shut ourselves off from Chinese companies, even if they're really just out to make money in a trade context. Just simply because they're Chinese, right? So I think there's generally there's a pretty clear distinction between forms of content that are wrong and manipulative and need to be blocked, and forms that are simply disagreements. And the problem with linking those decisions about what to block to the state as opposed to the community, the private actors, is that you get you tie these decisions into national security and geopolitics rather than it being based on you know what's really good for society. And for the communities that are involved.

Konstantinos Komaitis

So Farzi, then, I mean, do these multi stakeholder fora that Milton mentioned in the context of content moderation work? I mean, I know that you know, the community and by the community, I mean, the Internet community for the past 20 years, right. 20 to 25 years has been working very hard in trying to make this multi stakeholder governance do legitimize it in many ways within the context of the Internet, sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully. What about content moderation? Has it managed to legitimate and comforting alternative to traditional lawmaking so we can go back to regulators and actually say, there is a workable method here, you don't need to intervene the way you do.

Farzaneh Badiei

I think so, how can I say this nicely? So what consequences of course we have you noticed that quote, successful multi stakeholder models like like at ICANN and various other organizations and the Internet registries and like places like that, that we can refer to, and we can learn, learn from

them, but I believe that multistakeholder content governance is a skill, it's an interest. We are still trying out to see if it's possible, like if you look at the global insurance forum to counter a terrorism, it took us a long time to kind of kind of ask them to be multi stakeholder and then they listened or like to some extent, they use send and they are kind of but the effectiveness of DCT in combating terrorism and also like telling the regulators that look we are doing something effective here, you don't have to regulate us is still remains to be seen. And the problem is that I think that's multistakeholder current content. I think that regulators want to regulate and they think that by just removing content and taking taking them down, they are just they're better in a date, permanent process, less effective in the eyes of the public. So even as we tell them that we show them that there is there are these multistakeholder con content moderation initiatives and we are we are doing our best they still will not I don't I'm not I'm not sure they will buy that because they want to be seen as a lead regulator that are actually doing things and enforcing their laws on in cyberspace and they also they feel irrelevance. So these are also I wanted to add that about kind of like fighting this information and stuff like that. That is good. That is good plan. But but the EU especially some it says that whatever is illegal offline should be illegal online. I've got what sort of approach is that so many things that are illegal, offline should not be illegal offline. So I think that we are this is not only related to the Internet, I think that we are kind of like they are they are in crisis for becoming less relevant and imposing their laws on the Internet because they want to show control.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Right. Since just to be a little bit fair and to come to the defense, a little bit of the EU, everybody says what needs to be legally offline needs to be legally online and vice versa. I haven't heard it for I mean, I've heard it from every single jurisdiction. Now they use says that, you know, the Internet is like the Wild West and I will give you that is archaic and dated. I'll go to a question. We have a couple of questions. The first question is from Nicolas Fiumarelli, and he's from the youth IGF group Uruguay? And he says, Our Zero Rating practices also also a splinternet example. And what about unintentional BGP filtering things, such as the YouTube Pakistan telecom case? Is that also Splinternet example and a third one, we also root zone exclusion for certain ccTLD Splinternet it's in some manner. So we have three the question of the three parts and I love it because I feel that there is one for each one of you. I will start to get rolling. I know you will actually. I will start with Jane and the Zero Rating practices that we have seen around the world. Especially aware you know, it was training five years ago before the whole misinformation took us all by storm. Would you consider those beings part of Splinternet should those be considered as a splintering practice?

Jane Coffin

It's a splintering practice I would say from my perspective, versus a holistic -- here's what you've what you get access right?

Konstantinos Komaitis

Do you want to see a little bit of what Zero Rating is for just for the people that

Jane Coffin

Well it's I've heard so many... Why don't you give a definition because I've heard so many different definitions of this.

Konstantinos Komaitis

I think that in a nutshell, is the idea of offering free services as part of a package right? So you go and subscribe yourself with whatever provider you want anywhere. You might have Wikipedia and Facebook, and I don't know what else being part of the service without paying any sort of data. So you would consider that if that practice Splinternet?

Jane Coffin

Yeah, actually it would because it's to the benefit of the company who's providing that service versus the benefit of the person who can make a choice for themselves as to what sort of content they'd like, by only there's a plus minus here. Do you want to have people connected to the Internet and using using the Internet and learning more and having opportunity because there's a lot of opportunity, or is it your job to guard against all the content? Or are you a business that's only offering a certain type of service? And do you want to I would say it's up to the consumer, but the consumer would need to know what the whole scope is right, what they could and couldn't have access to. I am working with municipalities right now who do want to offer some free service. So I don't think that's a bad thing. Right? Because I'm becoming to see I'm seeing more and more that municipalities need a role in governance because in providing more connectivity, and providing opportunity to access services, because without that opportunity, some people don't know what's out there. And for some, it's not affordable. We've let some of the private brings take over. And they're not providing the type of connectivity that people need, the cheaper, better, faster access, and some of them are not getting it. It's obviously what we've seen during the pandemic but on zero rating. And I know Nicholas Hi, Nicholas. I think we need to make sure consumers know what they're what they're accessing and give them an opportunity. I don't think that that zero reading practice that you were talking about was a good one, because it but it could have been seen by others as Okay, well then they get access somehow cheaper. So it's a double edged sword. But I feel like consumers need to be able to make choices that are informed choices. And some of those choices were not informed.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thanks very much for that. And I think that begs also the question of that we can touch a bit later whether getting locked into walled gardens is also a form of Splinternet and or fragmentation, however, not all. What about the second part of the question, and perhaps you can remind us a little bit what happened in that case, if you do remember with YouTube and Pakistan

Milton Mueller

I think this is really an example of a broader issue of whether the fragmentation or disconnection is intentional or unintentional. So if the Pakistan regulator actually if the Pakistani telecom operator makes a mistake in how they configure the router, and that deep six is a bunch of packets and they don't get connected, that's just a mistake that is not example of Internet fragmentation. And that's the kind of issue that really made me want to clarify this issue by writing about it was that you can't say that every time you know my Wi Fi router goes down. The Internet is fragmenting or every time some cable you know, cuts it accidentally cuts a cable. Oh my god, the Internet is fragmenting No, those are just mistakes and unintentional interruptions in service, but you have to have a much more systematic understanding of what splintering or fragmentation of the entire Internet would be. So in the case of you know, the routing I think when Egypt was undergoing their ill fated revolution they cut off the Internet by telling their telecom operator to deliberately remove all the routes you know, to the rest of the world from from the that would that that was a splinter okay. If you know there are hundreds of mistakes made in routing tables every day around the Internet, but most of those are exactly that mistakes and they're not you know systemic in their in their impact. On the Internet.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thanks. And I think it is important also to say that some of these Well, most of these mistakes we don't even realize as users right and average user will not even understand that these mistakes are happening because they're getting addressed and they're getting fixed very easily because of the way the Internet was designed. Right it's agility and and and flexibility and the fact that you have autonomous system being able to address those things in a more independent way, is what the unique value of the Internet as opposed to a system that would be more centralized and top down and you need to ask for authority and you need to go through whatever the appropriate venues in order to be able and address the mistake. The last part of the question for the is whether there could also be a root zone exclusion for certain ccTLDs in the splinternet and I was I was planning on asking it a little bit later. But I think that, you know, it's a good link to what happened a couple of months ago was part of the Russian invasion to Ukraine. And perhaps you want to give us a little bit of context, what was the request that came from the Ukrainian

government or I can mention it very briefly. The Ukrainian digital ministry requested from ICANN that is the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. It is the management of the domain name system. And from one of the Internet registries that is the RIPE NCC which is responsible for Europe. And the Middle East for the allocation of IP addresses in Europe and the Middle East. They asked essentially to each in their respective roles to do what they can in order to remove essentially Russia of the Internet. And those requests were rejected and you and I have had plenty of conversations at the time. But this sort of created an impetus for some people to start calling for sanctions against Russia. And as part of those sanctions that were given was also let's call them Internet sanctions, for lack of a better term. Where do you sit on that? And what sort of Splinternet would be talking about them if that were to happen? Removal of necessity of these or replication of IP blocks of addresses.

Farzaneh Badii

So actually it was in 2014, that there was a case against .ir, .sy, and North Korea cctlds. And so the plaintiff, the complainant had the reach of attachments, because there were terrorist victims, and they had this... they wanted to get money from these terrorists case. So they thought that okay, the ccTLD these are properties, right? They are worth something. So they went to court and they asked for a court to give them the control over that ccTLD and kind of attach it to, which is which was a very interesting legal test. I'm just mentioning it to say that this kind of like thinking about adding a ccTLD or removing your ccTLD from from the roots is a very like a well discussed and well litigated issue. And so, in that case, I think that I think that the US court's ruling was a very very insightful and they said no and but then, in the end some of the questions about Splinternet and whether removing ccTLD from the roots down is electric leads to splinternet. For me, I still have not made up my mind and this is why I have I distinguish between when you actually you take away a property or a service. Access to a property or service on the Internet is so essential that the online existence of a often nation state can be engaged. So in the case of ccTLD like .ru or .ir, like removing them so yes there will be... there are like effects on their online presence, but it doesn't they still have access to the Internet. So I still and also like another principle that I think we should we should discuss is whether there are ways in these instances whether there are way alternative ways that you can use to still have access to global internets. So for example, if you can use a VPN, but in IP reputation that we will not have access to the Internet and that sense, but in the case of removing a ccTLD from the from the root zone or the kind of like blocking and I'm not saying that this is not the Internet, I'm just saying that we need to like kind of make these distinctions to think about it more systematically. and also like the global access so it does affect access to the Internet to the global Internet when you remove a ccTLD from from the roots down and about when you revoke their IP addresses they don't want have access to go into.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Awesome, thank you so very much. And it sort of goes back to the this whole idea and it's a good segue for the question or that we have from Ben Avisan of RAID, which is the regulation of AI Internet a data conference. And he's asking, is the splintering of the Internet going to be driven a) by primarily by a state's geopolitics, b) technology companies through the evolution of the metaverse Reliance or proprietary hardware, etc, or c) by consumers? And I saw that Milton was very quick to answer a), but I would like us to discuss whether, you know in using this question as the base. I want us a little bit to discuss about the way economies of scale have shaped a little bit the user experience and whether that can be referred to as a splinternet. Meaning that again over the past few years, the idea of walled gardens and that is ecosystems where unlike the Internet that is open and you know and everyone can participate without permission this concept of permissionless innovation that has been used especially in the beginning. I really not a thing right within those systems you still can operate but you're contractually bound by the by the the whims of either Apple or Google or Facebook, so on and so forth. Would you consider that Splinternet? Melton Are you changing your mind is this Splinternet or Splinternet is really limited to the way states may interact by erecting borders, you know, notional borders is where the physical borders are.

Milton Mueller

Right. I think that I think there's a lot of confusion about this issue. And I don't agree with what Jane said about, for example, the Zero Rating either I think this is an issue of these are different models. These are different business models. So saying that some kind of a private walled garden is splintering the Internet. Well, I would just ask you one question. Are they still using TCP IP for connectivity? Are they still integrated at layer three and four? If they are they're not splintering the Internet, they are creating a service that has a payment barrier. And so saying that, you know, these private companies are splintering the Internet by having a walled garden is like saying that the New York Times is splintering the Internet by requiring you to pay before you can see their newspaper. Or it may even mean you know that, you know, any kind of a service that requires you to log in, like a VPN, you know, is splintering the Internet and I think that's a fundamental confusion and abusive words. I don't think private actors unless you you're positing some gigantic global monopoly that literally takes over the entire Internet, which is not something I see as a major threat compared to states which are monopolies of force in a territory. But yeah, if there is a global private monopoly that somehow takes over all the domains and all the IP addresses and all the services, then you can talk about them. wintering the Internet in some way. But until then, I think you're just talking about different business models.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Milton, however, and if I may push back and I think that this is what Jane also and Jane perhaps you can you can take the time it really depends on what you mean by the Internet, right? And I know that you know, there are a lot of people out there that are having very different definitions about the Internet, but from an average user perspective, right, the Internet is... hopefully they see it as beyond, you know, the Facebook or the Google and they see the totality of it, you know, from the technology until the content they access. Would that make any difference in the way, you know, what do you tell to them, when you when they feel that they cannot access those things? And they feel that there is fragmentation or they're experiencing fragmentation? And suddenly they, you know, they hear oh, it's just the business model. But, you know, that's it. It's just an issue of business model.

Jane Coffin

Well, if you were a student in Sudan, or potentially Ethiopia, and the net goes down, not because of the net itself, but because someone doesn't want you to have access to content during the exam. That is control. Right? And that's government control, usually in some of those contexts, is there ordering the network's to shut down? I'm a big fan of not shutting down any access at all. It's ridiculous, but a more appropriate term would be please avoid Internet shutdowns. There's Miss Batchelor who uses from Chile has put a lot out on Twitter recently about shutdowns and I used to work greatly on that space, but my job is to help build networks and invest in them now. But and I take your point, Milton, I think some people think the Internet is their content. Don't see it as a different layer, because they're not informed enough maybe or they don't need to be informed. Like my mother doesn't need to know. She doesn't know what TCP IP is. She's intellectually capable. But I'm not going to sit down and talk about IP addresses, ASN and BGP because that would make her head hurt. She was a teacher, but what she needs to know is that how to access it she was able to access to Internet on her own terms. And she's lucky because she can and she she's got access to some cheaper service sometimes. But she's got the capability in some countries. If you are only offering the walled garden, Kay I would say no, I really am not a fan of being told what to do. So I wouldn't want to be told how I can consume information. But I also want the opportunity to choose and I feel like it too. I think both Tyrese and Milton have said this is that when governments start to jump in at a level where they're interfering with what I can do on how I access the Internet, what content I can access that really makes me uncomfortable because I feel like my own civil, my civil rights are being interfered with or my social rights. So there's a perspective there on that there's a balance of course with what's offered and this is always Milton, some of this always devolves into security issues when you're talking about kids online and the content that children should have access to, and, of course, would not want to see harm to children and with some of the content online but how do you balance all of this out? It's a

it's a major question. That's asked at every conference, I've been to what is the balance between what consumers want what the private sector is trying to provide and what the role of government is? And so it gets really tricky when it's a challenge on the content side.

Konstantinos Komaitis

So, talking a little bit about, you know, how... well understanding the internet's quite differently. One of the things that and one of the conversations that is currently happening, especially within the camp that sees the Internet a little bit more holistically, rather than just the infrastructure is that technology, currently on innovation is really not happening in the infrastructure of the Internet anymore, right? It really doesn't. I mean, the BGP protocol has not been updated in bazillion years. Not that it needs to, but there's no really any innovation that has happened within the Internet. Infrastructure. However, we're seeing more and more innovation being happening, you know, higher the stock, and it's just moving higher and higher and higher. Right. Right now, we're within the app system, and algorithms. So as part of that one of the questions that we're having from one of the participants from you and a new law is would you agree that algorithms that drive business models, which are based on over personalization, and polarization generate a form of splintering that restricts citizens opportunities to engage globally? In this context, can algorithms be understood as infrastructure, which I think is a very good question? Could splintering be measured and put governments or private actors potentially be held to account for trying to control traffic and influence or manage citizen behavior? That's a very good question. Milton?

Milton Mueller

Let's deal first with this distinction between what is infrastructure and what is not. So of course, the fundamental standards that enable global connectivity are stable and don't change. And look what happens when people talk about changing them. Suddenly, it's oh my god, they're Chinese. They want to have a new IP, or, or it's ipv6. So it's great except that it's incredibly costly to implement because everything changes and suddenly half of your software is incompatible, right? So you don't want that stuff to change, you may eventually need to upgrade those fundamental infrastructure protocols. But you shouldn't expect them to be innovating. And the whole point is that that kind of stability enables innovation at the higher levels. So and that is indeed happening and I think it's happening a lot. So our algorithms, infrastructure, I think, I think, you know, algorithms is turned into like a boogeyman, right? So algorithms are gonna get you right. But what is an algorithm and in fact, this is one of my hobby horses. Now, when people talk about AI as being a new technology, AI isn't a new technology. It's software. A software application. Just kind of uses data in a sophisticated way, but it's like it's nothing more, you know, categorically different than, you know, when you know, the word processing tells you that a certain word is, is

ungrammatical or misspelled right that's, that's AI that's an algorithm based on data. So can algorithms be used to engage in systematic social mind control? This is a question you're asking, isn't it?

Milton Mueller

I would say no. I would say yes. I'm sorry. I'm being I'm being I'm being controlled. No, no, never mind.

Milton Mueller

Algorithms are, are things that can be abused and they can be wrong, and they can be based on bias data. So it's like, but so can the non digital algorithms, right? If you go into the driver's license, the Department of Motor Vehicles in Atlanta, and stand in line in some miserable place and get your driver's eye you're going through an algorithm, you have to do this, you have to do that. And then when that step is completed, you go over there that's an algorithm. If the algorithm is discriminatory and bad, then you need to criticize it, you need to expose it, you need to get rid of it or change it. If the algorithm is something that says, hey, I can look at 70,000 radiology scans in two minutes. And discover that five of these people have a disease that we need to take care of. That's good. So you can't really say categorically whether algorithms are good or bad or infrastructure or not. They're they're just software applications. Really. And like all software applications, they are you know, they're varying quality vary in functionality.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Okay, anyone else would like to say anything briefly. Farzi, I see you're unmuting yourself, so?

Farzaneh Badiei

It's a very interesting question. But I think that we need to think more about this term that we are using, and what are we talking about here? Are we talking about like access to global Internet, and like blocking access to that global Internet? Is that a school Internet? If we aren't talking about that, then I don't see I can go and find some algorithms that you know, kind of like do that it blocks access to global Internet. And I can give you examples of it's not only blocking but it's climates but also undermining the quality of service so that you, it's on the service becomes unusable. So for example, in the issue of sanctions that I mentioned, some Internet exchange point points and peering organizations, they don't appear with organization up with those that are in sanction countries. And that's kind of it's also like redeem says quality of service and a pair access of those people to get Internet. So if there are like algorithms that can kind of flip affect the quality of service, and the properties and the essential properties of the Internet, that, you know, people can't go online or they can't have access to this global Internet, then yes, that's something to

consider. But if, like, you know, for example, I don't know it used to be also like consider, like when zoom doesn't want to provide a service to some to some countries, and I think that what we should always ask is, is there an alternative to this service on the Internet? Can this be done in other ways? If it can be done in other ways, then I don't think that's in turn that thing is really happening or we need to measure it.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Thank you Farzi. Jane, is there anything that you would like to add?

Jane Coffin

I would say, from an infrastructure perspective, whether algorithms are? It can alter my ability to choose your access as far as the amount and who said so? Is it hardcore Internet infrastructure? No. But is it a way to manipulate what rights on top of that infrastructure on the content? Yeah. versus, you know, robots, right?

Konstantinos Komaitis

Sure. So, I'm going to shift a little bit the conversation back to the role that governments and state actors play in this whole idea of Splinternet. And I think that one of the first examples that we sort of allowed us to come face to face with the idea of fragmentation and what it lets global Internet not look like because we didn't feel it, but you know how you could build a version of networking that doesn't really correspond to the way that the Internet operates was China, right? We saw there a very concerted effort. That didn't happen of course, overnight. It took years but they have managed to build the system that appears to people outside of China at least, to give the government the opportunity to do two things. A control the way its citizens, Chinese citizens receive information and absorb information and even interact or consume that information. But also it allows it to use the global Internet, right for commerce for retirement benefits for the states, you know, for the communist parties are the benefits and there's this oxymoron that is happening. And of course gives ideas, right? Milton, I will turn to you because I know you have a lot to say about China. First of all, China the no patient zero in some ways when it comes to this idea of fragmentation Splinternet and do you think that if you if you take Europe, if you take Russia if you take even Africa the different levels, right, but they're both they're all exercising control, do you feel that the ultimate goal is perhaps to replicate the way the Chinese are experiencing and promoting the idea of the entrance?

Milton Mueller

Excellent question, KK. I think that that's kind of hits the nail on the head is that China has occupied the extreme space of what I call alignment or some people call fragmentation which is

not really fragmentation in the sense that they're cutting themselves off from the Internet as you say they are very much invested in maintaining certain forms of global connectivity, but they don't want the information environment that should be free and open. They want the government to control particularly political forms of speech, but they also have imposed you know, the territorialization of data so these regulations that they have imposed on cloud service providers, the data localization requirements, the so called cybersecurity reviews. This is all about shielding them from unwanted foreign information at the national level, and preventing information going out that they don't want to go out. So, and I've often had this question when I've been talking to some of the people who are really radically against the big platforms, particularly Facebook, I really get the sense that what they want is something like the Chinese system of regulation of platforms, which is, you know, I don't know an example is they said, Okay, we're going to limit the amount of time that kids can play games and we're going to do this nationally through a compulsory regulation. It didn't work but it's an example of the top down authoritarian model of controlling what people see and what people get on the Internet and they do this through business regulation.

Konstantinos Komaitis

So, thank you very much for this. And I think that it paints a very clear picture, and I'm just going to bring one word and I would expect the reaction from both Farsi and Jane and that is RuNET. Right? Which, for those of you who are listening, and you're perhaps not familiar with the term is the Russian version of the Internet. And again, we have seen, especially in the past couple of years, big proclamations from Russia saying that, you know, not only do we have a new law, but we also have the capabilities of disconnecting from the Internet. And this, this became a thing, especially in the beginning of the war, whether Russia actually has the capabilities of disconnecting from the Internet and being able to detach itself from the global network, meaning that we wouldn't have visibility right, in many ways, what is happening within Russia with everything that comes the case. Firstly, I know that you've spent a little bit of time thinking about it. Is that the case did Russia actually has a has Russia the capabilities of disconnecting itself from the global network, whether these are technical or otherwise? And had they done that, to your knowledge? Of course,

Farzaneh Badiei

No.

I just I saw in the beginning there were all these kinds of speculations and, and a lot of pieces of news that were not accurate. So unfortunately, because you know, well, it is erratic actor, right? You don't know what they're going to do. So basically, whatever kind of like decision policy decision they will take about. I think one one case was about like something with their ccTLDs and

their ccTLD. And people are like, Oh, that's it. They're going to they're going to limit access. What they are doing is and they don't have to take the technical capability. Fortunately, Russian Internet was developed by private by various private network operators and Russia cannot afford at the low end. They've been talking about this for so many years. And they came up with with a law and but they have not been able to do that. But of course, with all these sanction policies and things that the outside world wants to do, to Russia to teach them a lesson, they will that will make their life and works easier to make Internet localized, it legitimizes they're like they say that, look, they impose all the sanction and not your Internet access is now going to be hampered. So we better have to use local, local Internet. And I think that I think that that route, going that route will expedite Russia's Internet local innovation and these authoritarian approaches and get more legitimized whenever the West makes these haphazard very like a you know, very quick, decisions as to punish the government like it happens in Iran all the time.

Konstantinos Komaitis

So I think yes, thank you very much for this Farzi. This is spot on. And at the same time, one of the things that, you know, creates the difficulty for Russia to actually walk the walk, in many ways is that unlike the Chinese that have early on, for seeing the possibility and they've tried to minimize as much as they could, the dependencies that are dependencies that exist. Russia hasn't managed to do that, right. So a lot of its contents content, for instance, leaves on servers outside of Russia. There is also there is not a lot of Russian content. So it can really create one sustainable rule net. But, Jay, back in the day, and I'm not going to mention the day of promise. You were in that region, and you spent some time in that region, right. And you were working towards liberalizing telecommunications at the time, and how to create a much more competitive market for telecom services and then also for any network services. Do you think that Russia is headed for what you know you had experienced at the time and of course the world is very different, right? Now. But the culture in these countries remains the same. Do you believe that Russia is actually working towards and has the capability of at some point down the road splitting itself from the Internet and perhaps even replicating what China has done?

Jane Coffin

Sure if they had enough money to throw at it and control that, I think is firstly we're seeing it might be too late. There are so many brilliant technologists from Russia, they can find ways around some of the systems. Also, I would just say the word visa. A lot of people don't know what they are. They're very small. Aperture terminal satellites. You put one on your embassy rooftop and you can pull down content and push out content. You don't have to connect to the local infrastructure there are resets all over the world. They're often brought in by Telecom, some frontier when there's a disaster to rebuild the Internet and or connectivity shall we say so you can

access content. But I think if they wanted to, they could put their minds to it. They could try but they're not going to pull themselves out of the as the roots on file as far as I had mentioned earlier, be ridiculous to do that. And if they wanted to create, I think they'd have to be like on the net and awesome at the same time, the Internet, right? That's a telco term often on that, but you would be dis at a disadvantage to their businesses as well. So I think at some point in time, something will take over where it's not economically useful thing for them to do. But could they do it technically? Sure. They could try but I don't think even China has different ways of well, I'll get into it, but I think they wouldn't be wise to do that. I don't think and we've seen as far as he said, they haven't managed to do it so far, but they've managed to create what I would call institutional fragmentation. Right? And it's something with governments where I'm looking at this from a different perspective to and I'll throw this out. There's the intentional, institutional fragmentation to try and create a separate net for themselves, but they do realize from a business perspective, and if you're going to monitor the heck out of which the government there often does, why would you want to get off the Internet? I mean, you'd want to have more access. But there are ways that you can create institutional fragmentation by maintaining your old rules and regulations, your old sanctions regimes, right. I'm looking at things in the United States right now. And there is institutional fragmentation. There's institutional exclusion of certain rural, remote and urban communities, due to the way the rules are currently in place, and not allowing in other alternative connectivity mechanisms, whether those are municipal. Networks, community networks, or whatever you want to call them, providing connectivity to people who need it the most, at affordable prices, and by keeping those old rules regs in place, you are institutionally excluding and creating a less whole Internet and there is fragmentation in the sense, I don't know if you call it fragmentation, there's exclusion. Right? And so I would say there's purposeful and then there's now what do you do to change it in more developed Internet economies and developed infrastructures? I know that kind of screws things up but I just wanted to throw that out there that even even the US is doing this, and it is acute. Yeah

Konstantinos Komaitis

That's really helpful. So then, it sounds like a lot of fragmentation. And I think that you all agree on that point is driven by political purposes and there is a question from Lavis Mensa that literally asks, if that's the case, Will we not consider all these acts as a form of Cold War? Are we back there? And is the Internet in the middle of all this? Reactions because we have literally 14 minutes and I have another couple of questions that I would like to go through. So are we are we experiencing some form of Cold War and I'm very, I mean, you know, me, I'm not big on these analogies, but you know, it is a really interesting question, especially if you say, are we experiencing a Cold War and is the Internet in the middle of that? I see Jane nodding Milton. Quick Reaction.

Milton Mueller

Yes, I think the US China thing is an incipient Cold War literally framed as such, if you look at the way the US political dialogue about China has been framed, it is the enemy it is we are in competition with it just as we were the Soviet Union. We are threatened by by it and by interactions with it. So and we're not at war and hopefully never will be but so it is a Cold War in that sense that we are engaged in some kind of geopolitical competition. And conflict without actually being in a military conflict. And the Internet is very much at the center of that. You know, from the 5G Huawei thing all the way to cutting off their service providers in the US and kicking them out taking away their licenses and China doing the same thing with the cloud service providers. So yeah,

Konstantinos Komaitis

Okay. Farzi?

Farzaneh Badiei

So I just wanted to say that I mean, I don't I'm not so sure I understand Cold War and I have written books about it. But what I think that Hopkins is kind of like this cure, all for infiltration of our democracy and cyber build day and everything is like going to collapse and Trump was elected by Russia, by the way, and that's because of the Internet. I went to State of the Net in 2018. And I thought..

Konstantinos Komaitis

Which is what, Farzi? Please explain what State of the Net is?

Farzaneh Badiei

It's a conference that all it happens in DC and, you know, Trump had been elected and everybody... it was 2017. Yes. So and everybody was just riled up. And the things that they were saying just reminded me of all the propaganda and the mullahs and the ayatollah, in the beginning of the revolution, every country is doing it. We're like repeating that these are foreign power, trying to steal our election and kill our democracy. And what this guy whose fault is it? It's the internet's obviously. Yeah. And this just it was so yes, we are definitely in the middle and and this is kind of like, and I have a better understanding because I saw it with satellite dishes and all that when it's happened. And so yeah, there was another point but I think I talked a lot so. Other questions?

Konstantinos Komaitis

Yeah. I think that I might need you know, one of the things that I keep on repeating and it seems not registered, but I keep on needfully tweeting the same thing is that you cannot address societal issues through technical fixes. I think I need to add, you cannot address societal or political issues, through technical fixes, because you know, the amount of times that we have heard the Internet is responsible for everything that is going on in literally in the world is quite remarkable. Or the belief that if you address or you know, if you fix things on the Internet magically everything else will also get fixed. I think that we have one question which I think is really spot on, especially to all three of you, and especially Milton and Farzi that look at Splinternet from this very much infrastructure perspective. And the question is as follows, IoT has some legs out of the Internet, where LoRan and RPL work, but they are not inside the TCP IP, essentially, you know, one of the things that we know is for IoT to connect, you need black boxes and it doesn't you know, the TCP IP protocol is not enough. This is more or less the justification that also the Chinese used before the International Telecommunications Union, which is a UN body to promote this new idea of new IP, right, the new IP protocol and for those of you who are listening in and you're not very familiar, in a nutshell, a couple of years ago, it might be more or might be less I can we went through a pandemic so I'm a little bit hazy and things. You know, they put forward through a wave sponsored by the Chinese government, they put forward a proposal before the ITU standardization body that was essentially saying that you know, there there is an area of new technologies emerging, gentlemen IoT and what have you, that TCP IP they you know, the TCP IP protocol, which is the basis for the Internet cannot support therefore, we need it, we need a new protocol. And let's discuss these protocols, which will be very different from the current one, by the way, it's not going to be decentralized going to be centralized, but it's going to come with security and privacy and all these other words that they're using, but let's discuss it with the UN. A, how valid Do you consider this justification? Either the one that the Chinese used or here in the context of IoT which is a very concrete example, and is the splinternet.

Milton Mueller

I think the fact that Internet protocol will not be suitable for certain cyber physical applications such as autonomous vehicles. This does in fact, create an opportunity for new standards. And frankly, I was surprised that when we standardized five G, that it continued to rely on TCP IP. I was very surprised by that. I thought if the telcos really want to get out of the Internet world. This was their opportunity. And they did the opposite. They went to TCP IP, which in many ways is a good thing. But it's simply the fact that you will there will have to be standard innovations in the cyberphysical I realm. And so again, I hope this does not get geo politicized and that we say that a Chinese company is trying to take over the world for the Chinese Communist Party because they're proposing a new standard for IoT. Let them propose their standard. Let them let the world

see how good it is. Let it compete in the market for adoption. But we're not headed in that direction. We're more in the Cold War direction. Don't you think?

Konstantinos Komaitis

Yes, and I think that you're raising a very important point here that often goes missed that a lot of those standards that are created through open and multistakeholder and bottom up processes, not all of them are adopted, right, they're just thrown into the market and then the market decides which are useful, which ones are useful, which one is useful, which ones are good and so on and so forth. When it comes to this conversation about the new IP, we don't even let that happen. Right. There is this fear that anything that might come from a certain actor and is thrown into the market is going to be imposed top down first. Do you see this? Do you feel that this is the case? And do you see any danger in what in how it behaves, visa vie new technologies, and also, whether you know, the standards coming out of the ITU are necessarily to be you know, doomed and we need to start literally running for the hills.

Farzaneh Badiei

You know my love for nation states. Anyone of them, but I think that we are dealing with a very tricky and dangerous issue here, which is, uh, we, uh, we just did we kind of going, going out of our way from the neutrality and from kind of like non discrimination based these principles that we had at the IETF other other standard setting organizations that just because you're Chinese or a Chinese company, that standard that you come up with doesn't necessarily mean that it's a bad standard. It's open and kind of like now we are have started bashing that kind of neutrality stance that actually made the Internet work. And we we are we discriminate against people because of their nationality. And the add to this, this is going to be bad for the Internet. It's going to be bad for any standard setting organizations. Like for example, I remember that page. They removed editors of a standard setting organization because he was Chinese that that is the reason and this is going to this is going to keep happening. And I think it it's going to affect the global nature or nature of the Internet. I still think that Internet is global and and I think that it's going for example, forget that it something is coming out of itu what my my problem is with their processes and that they are not inclusive. And you know what if they if they have like inclusive process and that non state actors can also can also participate and that's great. My problem is not with like whether this is Chinese or Iranian, my problem with their processes.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Okay, thanks for that. That was clear. Jane, you were in Kigali, and that was the world. Well, the WTSA or the WTDC the development conference was taking place and the new ipv6 Plus which is you know, the rebranding of the new IP popped up. The African region will be key in how this plays

out and where this plays out in some ways, right. How did you What was your perception of things being there? How do people in Africa react to the possibility of actually conducting some of these discussions within spaces where they seem to be able to participate more actively, rather than in other ones?

Jane Coffin

It was the Regional Internet Registries were there, the RIRs? Many of them were at the meeting. And so particularly AfriNIC, and staff who had been at AfriNIC, who are part of the ITU staff now like specifically a good colleague who runs the African Bureau, for the ITU used to be one of the figures in the AfriNIC leadership. So you have a lot of education going on across the continent from AfriNIC from ISOC. From and from ICANN, you do need that information disseminated broadly because you don't want the government's I think, as Milton was saying, making decisions about the protocols when you when it's core Internet infrastructure, that you're talking about. There is deep need for more information to be exchanged. But I actually think that the people saw that the contribution into the meeting was a red herring. It was to create a possibility for horse trading or for negotiation. And so there were a couple of things like this. And sometimes you look at these and think, gosh, is this really because Huawei wouldn't want to put this into the development conference right now because there's no normative standard coming out of the development conference. It's not a legal it's not a treaty making conference. It's really more about awareness and information and education and capacity. Development, and making sense. Government's about good things and sometimes bad, or what we might perceive to be tricky, but this was this was more about a fate, if you will, or a way to just divert attention. It did attention, but it wasn't as much of the showstopper as I thought it would be. At the meeting, and it was I think this is thanks to an education campaign that I've seen take place for the last 15 years by the regional Internet registries and I think it goes to how to embrace bottom up governance of the Internet and the standards without trying for top down control.

Konstantinos Komaitis

Awesome. So we're literally on time, but if I just may ask literally for 30 seconds of what would be if you had the magic wand. What would be the one thing that you would ensure does not happen? That will contribute to splinternet. 30 seconds. Milton?

Milton Mueller

The digital markets act,

Konstantinos Komaitis

Which, by the way, just passed the parliament. The European Parliament voted in favor overwhelmingly today. So we have a law in Europe officially. Farzi?

Farzaneh Badiei

I would convince the government to leave us alone, that we do engage in a multi stakeholder or some other way and not just all the time come up with bad regulation.

[Dog]

Woof!

Konstantinos Komaitis

Okay, thank you, and Danice agrees.

Milton Mueller

Dog likes that.

Konstantinos Komaitis

The dog really likes that, Farzi.

Jane Coffin

I would say no more shutdowns, so more net.

Konstantinos Komaitis

So, I think that this is a great way to end this conversation. No more shutdowns. Thank you all. So very much normal Splinternet normal fragmentation. Milton, Farzi, Jane, always a pleasure to have a chat with you about things. To [names] and Konstantina Nathanail and everyone else who helped put this thing together. Thank you so very much, and to everyone who tuned in. Thank you very much for asking questions and for meeting and see you all in cyberspace. Bye

Jane Coffin

Bye